

April 10, 2018


His Excellency Martín Vizcarra  
President of the Republic of Perú  
Palacio de Gobierno  
Lima, Perú

Dear President Vizcarra,

As leaders in the United States and Argentine legislatures concerned with the worsening humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, we urge you to utilize the upcoming Summit of the Americas to develop a path forward for the thousands of refugees fleeing their country. Specifically, we respectfully ask you to seek a commitment from your counterparts at the Summit to both open their countries to Venezuelan refugees and to assist efforts by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide protection to these individuals.

More than 1.5 million Venezuelans are currently displaced in the Americas with a 2000 percent increase in asylum claims since 2014. A recent report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) explains, "Almost 90 percent of Venezuela's population has dropped below the poverty line, and the middle class has virtually disappeared. Unable to eat more than one meal a day, the average Venezuelan has lost 24 pounds in the last year." Medical shortages are also the norm with CSIS stating, "Pharmacies have a shortage of approximately 85 percent of drugs, and hospitals receive less than a tenth of the basic supplies and medicines they need to operate."

UNHCR recently put out an appeal for \$46 million to respond to the needs of Venezuelans arriving to neighboring countries. This funding would be focused on six priorities: (1) Preparing for heightened outflows; (2) Making protection and assistance needs understood; (3) Strengthening national asylum systems; (4) Protecting the most vulnerable individuals; (5) Preparing short to medium term solutions on social inclusion and access to work; and (6) communicating with national and regional actors to combat discrimination and xenophobia and create awareness among Venezuelans of their rights and responsibilities.



The Summit of the Americas presents a unique opportunity for heads of state from the Western Hemisphere to gather together and attempt to tackle the top challenges facing our nations. We urge you to use this gathering to seek a firm commitment from your counterparts to open their countries to Venezuelan refugees and to assist UNHCR efforts in the region. We stand ready both to support these efforts in the United States and Argentine Congresses and to encourage our partners from legislatures throughout the Western Hemisphere to do the same.

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Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

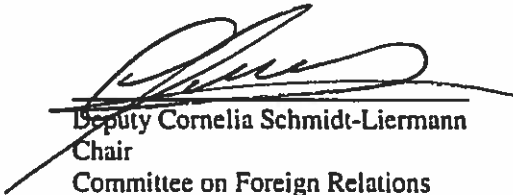
Sincerely,



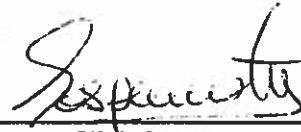
Representative Eliot L. Engel  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives



Representative Michael T. McCaul  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives



Deputy Cornelia Schmidt-Liermann  
Chair  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
Chamber of Deputies of the Nation  
Republic of Argentina



Deputy Silvia Lospennato  
Chair  
U.S. Parliamentary Friendship Group  
Chamber of Deputies of the Nation  
Republic of Argentina